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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3269

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 000223

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: CY 2005 END USE MONITORING REPORT

REF: STATE 238640

11. Vehicles and equipment provided to the GOA include: two fiberoptic scopes provided in 2005, one to the Aduanas' anti-narcotics unit in Mendoza and one to the DEA funded Northern Border Task Force (NBTF); one man-portable X-ray machine provided in 2005 to the NBTF; four vans provided in late 2005 to the NBTF; several computers provided in 2004 to the NBTF; 11 vehicles provided in late 2004 to the NBTF and the anti-narcotics units of Aduanas and Prefectura; and, a large list of older vehicles provided prior to 1999 to various federal and provincial law enforcement units.

Procedures Used to Verify End-Use

12. The vast majority of the equipment is located in Salta, Jujuy and Mendoza Provinces. Post's INL narcotics coordinator does not have PD&S funding and as such is unable to fund on-site inspections, or periodic spot checks, to verify end use monitoring in these remote locations. The INL narcotics coordinator relies upon DEA Officers to assess appropriate usage of INL-funded equipment. Also, trusted Argentine law enforcement officials provide us with periodic updates on equipment usage when requested to do so. Short of receiving PD&S funding to enable the INL narcotics coordinator to personally conduct end use monitoring, this system of overlapping verification methods, while not ideal, is the best possible end use appraisal system currently available.

Status

13. The majority of the equipment and vehicles provided are located in the northern provinces of Salta and Jujuy, with some computer and communication equipment located with the successor unit for a defunct airport task force in Buenos Aires. All indications are that all provided equipment is being used for the intended purposes, no single case of inappropriate or unauthorized use has been reported in 2005. A large number of the items listed on the current end use monitoring list are old or aging computers, vehicles and radio equipment, much of which is near or well past its "useful life." A major priority for the INL narcotics coordinator in 2005 was the total overhaul of the end use monitoring system to eliminate items that have exceeded their "useful life." For example, Post's end use monitoring list contains vehicles purchased in 1989, and while DEA and GOA officials attest that all the vehicles are accounted for, a great many of them are inoperable. Unfortunately, Post received \$0 PD&S funding so the end use monitoring system was not revised. Post has again requested PD&S funding in FY2006 and hopes to update and revise the end use monitoring system before the end of 2006. In general, the equipment provided through INL funding continues to be used, but with problems coming from advancing age and hard use. For example, radio

transmitters provided to the Northern Border Task Force (NBTF) require routine maintenance and repair. We will also have to repair or replace numerous hand-held radios provided to federal and provincial police throughout Argentina because of wear and tear resulting from routine use under harsh operational and climatic conditions.

Problems

¶4. A lack of PD&S resources limits the INL narcotics coordinator's effectiveness in managing Post's INL account. With recent political changes in neighboring Bolivia, a growing cocaine trafficking problem in Argentina and the GOA's increasing willingness to work with Post on CN issues Post has an opportunity to greatly improve the GOA's ability to combat drug trafficking, but a lack of funding hampers Post's efforts in this area. The INL narcotics coordinator has requested PD&S funding to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of provided equipment in order to consolidate the listing of equipment needing to be monitored, and to re-employ an EFN employee hired to conduct the end use monitoring program.

Impact of INL Program

¶5. While the INL-funded equipment program in Argentina has been a small one, it continues to have a positive impact, especially on the perennially under-funded anti-drug units operating in the northern provinces. Argentine law enforcement agencies have reported large year-on-year increases in cocaine seizures several years in a row. Post, led by the DEA, has actively assisted local law enforcement in their CN efforts. Overall, our program gives us a valuable tool with which to pursue our joint counter-narcotics agenda with the GOA. The GOA is currently very focused on its security and narcotics problems, and they have turned to Post for advice and assistance in creating a national security plan. In coming years the INL program could continue to assist the GOA's efforts both to combat its growing narcotics trafficking problem and establish better control over its border areas.

GUTIERREZ